



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
FOOD & AGRICULTURE

Karen Ross, Secretary

November 14, 2014

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
TO CONSIDER CONTINUATION OF THE
CALIFORNIA BLUEBERRY COMMISSION**

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (Department) is calling a public hearing to receive testimony and evidence from California blueberry producers, handlers, and the general public on whether the operation of the California Blueberry Commission should be continued. Pursuant to Section 79291 of the California Food and Agricultural Code, the Department is required to conduct such a hearing every five years to determine if the Commission is fulfilling its declared purposes. The Commission was implemented in 2010 and has yet to undergo a continuation process.

The California Blueberry Commission is a State marketing program that conducts promotion and export market development, scientific research, education, and data collection and dissemination activities relating to California's blueberry industry. These activities are funded by mandatory assessments levied upon all California blueberry handlers and producers with more than five acres of production.

The public hearing is scheduled as follows:

Date / Time	Location
Monday December 15, 2014 Beginning at 10:00 a.m.	California Department of Food and Agriculture Room 101 2800 Gateway Oaks Drive Sacramento, California 95833

HEARING PROCEDURE

All affected California blueberry producers, handlers, and other interested persons are invited to participate in this hearing. At the hearing, a panel composed of Department staff will receive testimony and evidence, both oral and documentary, regarding the following:

1. The production, economic, and marketing conditions affecting the blueberry industry of this state;
2. Whether the California Blueberry Commission tends to effectuate the declared purposes and attain the declared objectives for which it was established;
3. Whether the California Blueberry Commission furthers the interests of the residents of California.

(over)



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Additionally, written comments submitted to the Department's Marketing Branch by Thursday, December 11, 2014 will be accepted and entered into the hearing record. Please send all such correspondence to the attention of Joe Monson at the mailing address listed on the front side of this notice or by email to: joe.monson@cdfa.ca.gov.

The hearing transcript, written comments, and evidence submitted (the hearing record) will be considered by the Department in determining if the California Blueberry Commission will be authorized to continue. If the hearing record documents that the Commission is fulfilling its declared purposes, the Department may authorize the Commission to operate for another five years without the need for an industry referendum. However, if the Department finds from the hearing record that a substantial question exists as to whether the Commission is fulfilling its declared purposes, the Department will conduct a vote of affected blueberry producers and handlers to determine if the Commission should be continued.

HEARING PREPARATION

At the hearing, supporters of the California Blueberry Commission should provide testimony that communicates why they believe the Commission should be continued. Conversely, those who oppose the continuation of the Commission should provide testimony that substantiates their concerns. In preparing testimony, witnesses may wish to consider the following questions:

- Has the California blueberry industry benefited from the activities funded by the California Blueberry Commission? If yes, please explain how. If no, please explain why not.
- What are the most significant accomplishments of the Commission over the last five years?
- What problems, if any, would the industry face in the absence of a mandatory industry-funded program?
- Does the general public benefit from the activities of the California Blueberry Commission? If yes, please explain how. If no, please explain why not.
- Have assessment monies been spent wisely, efficiently and according to the authority granted to the Commission?
- Are there ways that the Commission could be improved?

If you have questions regarding this hearing or the California Blueberry Commission, please call Alexander Ott, Executive Director of the California Blueberry Commission, at (559) 221-1800 or Joe Monson with the Department's Marketing Branch at (916) 900-5018.

Sincerely,



Robert Maxie, Chief
Marketing Branch